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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Argentina, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and United States of America: draft resolution

Importance of human rights in the early warning and prevention of mass exoduses and in the emergency operations of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Deeply disturbed by the escalating scale and magnitude of exoduses of refugees and displacements of population in many regions of the world and by the human suffering of millions of refugees and displaced persons,

Recalling its previous relevant resolutions, as well as those of the Commission on Human Rights, particularly resolution 1995/88, and the conclusions of the World Conference on Human Rights, which recognized that gross violations of human rights, including in armed conflicts, are among the multiple and complex factors leading to displacement of people, and the need for a comprehensive approach by the international community to address root causes and effects of movements of refugees and other displaced persons and the strengthening of emergency preparedness and response mechanisms,

Noting that the Secretary-General, in his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace", 1/ identifies the protection of human rights as an important element

1/ A/47/277-S/24111.

of peace, security and economic well-being and highlights the importance of preventive diplomacy, identifies the linkage between preventive diplomacy and humanitarian assistance and recognizes that preventive diplomacy requires an early warning capacity, and noting also that the Security Council in the statement by its President on the Supplement to the Agenda for Peace 2/ on 22 February 1995, 3/ endorsed the view expressed by the Secretary-General concerning the crucial importance of economic and social development as a secure basis for peace and in preventing conflicts, as in healing the wounds after conflicts have occurred,

Welcoming the decision by the Administrative Committee on Coordination that the inter-agency consultations on early warning regarding new flows of refugees and displaced persons chaired by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs be continued, with the purpose of serving both prevention of, and preparedness for, emergencies,

Welcoming also the initiative by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of establishing a pilot project of the Humanitarian Early Warning System, with the purpose of identifying potential crises with humanitarian implications through the analysis of its database, and welcoming further the establishment by the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of interdepartmental consultations for the joint analysis of early warning of looming crises, within a broader framework for the coordination of operational planning and implementation among the three departments,

Recognizing the important aspects of complementarity between the system for the protection of human rights and humanitarian action, and that humanitarian agencies make an important contribution to the realization of human rights,

Recognizing also that the human rights machinery of the United Nations, including the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and the human rights treaty bodies has important capabilities to address human rights violations that cause movements of refugees and displaced persons or prevent durable solutions to their plight,

Convinced that the activities of these mechanisms, with a view, inter alia, to preventing mass exoduses and the strengthening of emergency preparedness and response mechanisms should be encouraged and further developed and coordinated, with priority given to the systematization of early warning information collection,

Recognizing that women and children constitute approximately 80 per cent of most refugee populations and that, in addition to the problems and needs they share with all refugees, women and girls in such circumstances are vulnerable to gender-based discrimination and gender-specific violence and exploitation,

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2/ A/50/60-S/1995/1.

3/ S/PRST/1995/9.

Welcoming the continuing efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to meet the protection and assistance needs of refugees and other persons of concern to her Office world wide,

1. Takes note with interest of the report of the Secretary-General on human rights and mass exoduses; 4/

2. Invites again all Governments and intergovernmental, humanitarian and non-governmental organizations concerned to intensify their cooperation and assistance in world-wide efforts to address the serious problems resulting from mass exoduses of refugees and displaced persons, and the causes of such exoduses;

3. Encourages States that have not already done so to consider acceding to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol of 1967, and other relevant regional refugee instruments and relevant international human rights instruments;

4. Welcomes the statement made by the High Commissioner for Refugees at the fifty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights, in which she emphasized that human rights concerns go to the essence of the cause of refugee movements, as well as to the precepts of refugee protection and the solution of refugee problems;

5. Urges all bodies involved in inter-agency consultations on early warning to cooperate fully in and to devote the necessary resources to the successful operation of the consultations;

6. Welcomes the initiative by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to establish a pilot project of the Humanitarian Early Warning System, the continuation of the inter-agency consultations regarding new flows of refugees and displaced persons, as well as the establishment of inter-departmental consultations for the joint analysis of early warning of looming crises, within a broader framework for the coordination of operational planning and implementation among the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations;

7. Welcomes also the contribution made by the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat to the development of the Humanitarian Early Warning System of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs;

8. Invites the special rapporteurs, special representatives and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, to continue seeking information, where appropriate, on problems resulting in mass exoduses of populations or impeding their voluntary return home and, where appropriate, to include such information, together with recommendations thereon, in their reports, and to bring such information to the attention of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;

4/ A/50/566.

9. Requests all United Nations bodies, including the human rights treaty bodies, the specialized agencies and governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to cooperate fully with all mechanisms of the Commission and, in particular, to provide them with all relevant information in their possession on the human rights situations creating or affecting refugees and displaced persons;

10. Requests the High Commissioner for Human Rights to pay attention to situations that cause or threaten to cause mass exoduses and to address effectively such situations through emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, including information-sharing with United Nations early warning mechanisms, and the provision of technical advice, expertise and cooperation;

11. Urges the Secretary-General to attach high priority and allocate the necessary resources to the consolidation and strengthening of all United Nations early-warning activities for the purpose of ensuring, inter alia, that effective action is taken to identify all human rights abuses that contribute to mass outflows of persons;

12. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare and submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a report containing detailed information on early warning activities in the United Nations, including detailed information on the programmatic, institutional, administrative, financial and managerial efforts undertaken to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to undertake such activities;

13. Decides to continue its consideration of this question at its fifty-second session.